

HELPING HIS EXCELLENCY: SHAPING THE AFGHAN MOD


Defence**Focus**

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RESERVES OF STRENGTH

Looking at what some of our reservists are doing in Kabul

A dramatic landscape at sunset with soldiers and a satellite dish. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, and a bright sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow. In the foreground, three soldiers in military uniforms are visible. One soldier stands with his back to the camera, looking out over the horizon. Two other soldiers are standing together, looking at a device or map. To the right, a large satellite dish is mounted on a tripod. The overall mood is serious and focused.

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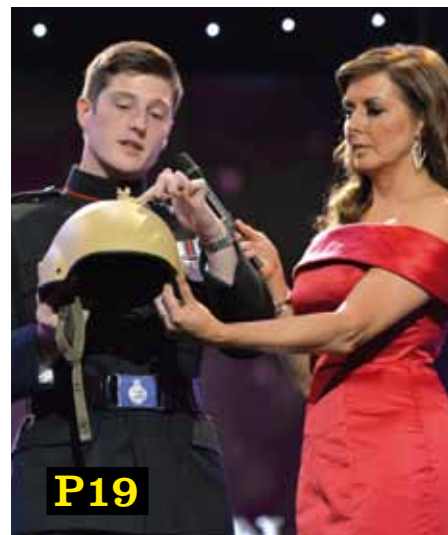
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Level 1 Zone C
MOD, Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB
General enquiries: 020 721 8 1320

EDITOR: Fiona Simpson
Tel: 020 721 8 3949
email: fiona.simpson102@mod.uk

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Ian Carr
Tel: 020 721 8 2825
email: ian_carr@dmc.mod.uk

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Leigh Hamilton
Tel: 020 721 8 5988
email: leigh.hamilton933@mod.uk

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Lorraine McBride
Tel: 020 721 8 2341
email: lorraine_mcbride@dmc.mod.uk

ART EDITOR: Mark Eagle
Tel: 020 721 8 3658
email: designer_defencefocus@dmc.mod.uk

DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPORT: Shell Daruwala
Tel: 020 721 8 1320
email: shell.daruwala932@mod.uk

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FIONA SIMPSON



I sometimes feel a bit stuck in the Westminster bubble. Although I have a nice view of the bottom left-hand corner of the London Eye, it's always nice to get out and meet some real people.

This month I've actually been let out of the office and, even though it was just down the road, it was a great experience.

I went along to an event at the Tower of London to meet some of the incredibly humble heroes who have been recognised in the latest operational honours list.

There are some amazing tales of bravery, often tinged with sadness for people who were lost, and you can read just a few of them starting on the next page.

Our reservists are also out and about, in a much further-flung manner than my trip to the Tower. On his recent trip to Afghanistan Ian Carr met some of the reservists who are deployed in Kabul, working in jobs that range from protection officers to postmen. There is also an interview with medical reservist Colonel Heidi Doughty, who has perfectly balanced the civilian and military in her 30-year career.

Also in the magazine this month is an interview with Alf Hitchcock, not the famous (and dead) film director, but Alf Hitchcock, Chief Constable of the MOD Police. Six months into his appointment he talks to Lorraine McBride about his first impressions, what attracted him away from the regular police, and what his plans are for the MOD police service in the future.

And I can start planning my next excursion when I'm next allowed out of the office. Until then, back to the view of that bit of the London Eye.

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Picture: Corporal Steve Blake RLC

Mercian pride: Corporal Josh Griffiths

IT'S AN HONOUR

IAN CARR TALKS TO FOUR HEROES FROM OP HERRICK 17 AT THE OPERATIONAL HONOURS AND AWARDS CEREMONY

How would you react in the face of extreme peril? Fortunately few of us get to find out. The servicemen and women recognised in the Operational Honours and Awards List

have all faced that test and demonstrated character of the highest order. Yet these modest heroes shun praise, preferring to credit their comrades rather than hog the limelight. Here are some of their stories.

“About 15 minutes into the fight my eye started feeling sore, then one of the lads looked at me and said ‘uh, you’ve been hit in the face guy!’ I never realised because as we were firing I was only using my right eye anyway.”

Thanks to his immediate actions the insurgents were halted at the northern wall of the base, allowing the casualties from the initial explosion to be extracted.

As other uninjured soldiers began to arrive, Corporal Griffiths again shrugged off his own injuries and, aided by the Sergeant Major, led a small team of soldiers as they charged forward in order to secure the base.

As well as suffering a damaged eye in the initial blast, the fourth vertebrae in Corporal Griffiths’ back had been broken.

His actions certainly saved the lives of his wounded comrades and contributed significantly to the successful defence of the base.

On receiving his award he said: “It’s a great honour, but we lost a lad that day, so I’d rather that hadn’t happened. Having him alive would be better. There were a lot of lads fighting alongside me, so I’m lucky for getting this award. The whole company was amazing.”

CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY CROSS CORPORAL JOSH GRIFFITHS THE MERCIAN REGIMENT

Corporal Griffiths had finished his stint of guard duty for the day at Patrol Base Folad in north Nad ‘Ali. He had just gone to the cookhouse and was queuing for a plate of beef stir fry with his mates when a massive vehicle bomb tore through the outer wall of the joint Afghan National Army and ISAF base.

Estimated to be made up of half-a-tonne of explosives, the bomb left a 40-metre gap in the perimeter wall, exposing the base to a well organised and complex attack. The cookhouse was destroyed, as was the operations room, which had been hit by two rocket-propelled grenades, resulting in casualties.

“I thought we’d been hit by a mortar at first, and then when I got outside I could see green fields where the Hesco walls should have been, and I thought ‘that ain’t the camp’,” Corporal Griffiths told *Defence Focus*.

In fact Corporal Griffiths had himself been seriously wounded. But he ignored his injuries when he realised that a small number of determined insurgents had already gained entry into the patrol base and were less than 50 metres away from him and the other casualties.

Wearing no protective equipment, he rallied the dazed soldiers around him. Armed with a light machine gun that he had grabbed in the chaos, Corporal Griffiths faced down the enemy who were throwing grenades and firing automatic weapons; placing himself and one other soldier between the casualties and the insurgents.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

MILITARY CROSS ACTING LANCE CORPORAL TULJUNG GURUNG THE ROYAL GURKHA RIFLES

Lance Corporal Gurung, who was at the time a rifleman, was on guard duty at the front gate of Patrol Base Sparta in Nahr-e Saraj in a three-metre-high Hesco Bastion sangar when he was attacked.

Nearing the end of his duty at four o'clock in the morning he noticed two individuals running towards him across the fields from a disused compound 90 metres to the south.

"I shouted loudly at them to stop, but once they heard my voice one of them started to shoot at me," said Lance Corporal Gurung.

As rounds struck the frame of the sangar, he returned fire but was struck by a bullet on the left-hand side of his helmet and knocked to the floor. "I just felt that somebody came from behind and hit my helmet with big hammers," he said. "My neck was sore and I felt so much pain."

As he regained his footing to resume his fire position, Lance Corporal Gurung saw a grenade bounce off the ceiling of the sangar and land next to him. Still groggy from the bullet striking his helmet, he showed exceptional instinct and courage, pushing the grenade out of the sangar just before it detonated. The blast peppered the sangar with fragmentation, knocking

him off his feet yet again.

Then, through the dust and debris, Lance Corporal Gurung spotted one of the insurgents climbing into the sangar. "I saw him face-to-face, he was quite a lot bigger than me and wearing thick clothing. He was so close I didn't get a chance to swing my rifle and injure him, but I suddenly realised I had my kukri knife in my osprey (body armour) so I took it out and started to hit him with it," said Lance Corporal Gurung.

"When I saw him I thought I don't want to die, I want to live. If I am alive I can save my colleagues. I have to do something, so like a madman I did everything."

In the ensuing hand-to-hand combat Lance Corporal Gurung and the insurgent toppled over the wall of the sangar and fell three metres, landing on the ground outside the patrol base. Tenaciously he continued to fight with his kukri to defend the base, until the two insurgents turned and fled.

The citation said that Lance Corporal Gurung's actions showed the highest levels of gallantry and courage. His speed of reaction and utter disregard for his own safety prevented two armed insurgents from gaining access to the patrol base and prevented loss of life.

On receiving the award Lance Corporal Gurung said: "I didn't expect an honour like this. It is something special. I was quite surprised and happy."



Picture: Corporal Steve Blake RLC

MENTION IN DESPATCHES LANCE CORPORAL RACHEL MARIE HUGHES ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

While on her first operational tour, Lance Corporal Hughes, an army medic, administered life-saving medical treatment on three separate occasions.

The first time was when, as the only medic in a temporary base, Hughes was faced with providing emergency treatment to four Afghan children. They had been brought to the base by their family after their tractor had overturned into a canal, trapping the children underwater. Two were in a critical condition.

Although she was prepared for a major incident, Lance Corporal Hughes didn't know what she would be facing until the children were brought in. "It was a shock to start with, but the training soon kicks in and you do what you have to," she said.

She instigated her plan and, despite the severity of their condition and the anxiety associated with the treatment of children, provided life-saving aid.

Four days later, she again saved a child's life after a boy was brought to the base following a traumatic amputation of the lower leg and severe loss of blood. "It was the first IED casualty I had seen. I was pretty nervous because you can't really prepare yourself for something like that. But again the training kicked in. You go into the zone like it's second nature," said Lance Corporal Hughes. "It definitely helped strengthen our relationship with the locals. They were very warm to us when we were on patrol, and would bring us gifts."

On the third occasion, Lance Corporal Hughes was the medic during an Afghan police-led operation in the notoriously dangerous area of Alikozai.

Her platoon came under fire resulting in a casualty who sustained a gunshot wound to the neck. Without hesitation and under fire, Hughes moved to the casualty,



Lieutenant General Bradshaw congratulates Lance Corporal Gurung

Picture: Corporal Steve Blake RLC

who was bleeding from the carotid artery.

Battling against rapid loss of blood, Lance Corporal Hughes stemmed the bleeding and cleared his airway. Her treatment was faultless, but the casualty's condition deteriorated.

Hughes stayed focused and fought to keep him alive against the odds. This she successfully did, and he arrived at the Camp Bastion military hospital in a condition where he could be operated on. The praise from the surgeons was unequivocal in their belief that, without her unfaltering and single-minded desire to save his life, he would have died at the scene. "We managed to get him home to his parents, which was the main thing," she said. "I'd been their medic for the whole tour, so it meant a lot to me that he knew I was there for him."

Her citation says: "Throughout the tour, Lance Corporal displayed a level of medical professionalism which exceeded that expected of someone of her rank and experience. Her performance instilled confidence in the platoon, and despite considerable emotional strain she maintained her composure and focus throughout, never allowing her personal feelings to affect the medical treatment she delivered."

On receiving her award she said: "I'm still in shock. I'm in awe of all the other guys who have won awards and I'm really privileged to be among them."



Picture: Sergeant Ralph Merry ABIPPP RAF

**QUEEN'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVERY IN THE AIR FLIGHT
LIEUTENANT CHRISTOPHER GENT
ROYAL AIR FORCE**

Flight Lieutenant Gent was an aircraft commander in the UK Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) at Camp Bastion.

On 20 December 2012, a heavy fog had reduced visibility to around 50 metres, halting all Task Force Helmand activity. All flying had been cancelled. "It was literally

the first day that our crew had served on the MERT, so we were just getting our feet under the table for the morning shift when the phone rang," said Gent.


An Afghan National Army soldier had been shot in the head during an operation 25 miles to the east and needed urgent evacuation to hospital. Even though all helicopters were grounded, after rapid consideration of the situation the Joint Aviation Group launched Gent's crew to try to recover the casualty. His helicopter took off just 14 minutes after the emergency call.

"A cat alpha call is the highest priority thing we do. Your focus is on saving a guy's life. I'd probably have been within my rights to say we can't fly in these conditions, but I was confident in the abilities of the whole crew. If you don't do everything you can for somebody, well it just wouldn't sit right with you."

Gent's handling of his aircraft in severely adverse weather and his leadership of an understandably apprehensive crew was exemplary. "We had to hover-taxi for part of the way, so we were flying at about 20 to 30 feet off the ground at about walking pace."

Gent skillfully positioned his Chinook helicopter to land near the casualty. During the flight the aircraft was vulnerable, not just to terrain and obstacles, but also to insurgents known to be in the area. As the fog closed around them, Flight Lieutenant Gent's crew loaded the casualty and started the return flight, again forced to fly low despite the risk of insurgent attack to avoid missing Camp Bastion in the fog.

Gent and his crew were under pressure as the casualty's condition deteriorated. However, through his extremely cool leadership and expert flying in abysmal weather, they returned safely to Camp Bastion. But visibility was too poor to land, so Gent arranged for an ambulance to meet the helicopter on the only part of the camp he knew would be clear of masts and wires – the main runway. This required calm and detailed co-ordination to minimise the risk of collision with another aircraft.

On receiving his award he told *Defence Focus*: "I'm really flattered, it's a massive honour. All the Chinook crews do an amazing job in Afghanistan. I'm proud to accept the award, but it is on behalf of the whole crew." 



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Travel safely: Corporals James Goff and Mark Finmore (right) from Deputy Commander ISAF's Close Protection Team keep a close watch on our reporter

Pictures: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC

RESERVES COMMENT

IAN CARR TALKS TO RESERVISTS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES AND WHAT THEY ARE DOING IN KABUL

There's no doubt that reservists are on our radar at the moment. Not only are their numbers set to swell, the Army's target is to have 30,000 trained reservists in place by 2018, but their role is changing too. So, while in Kabul, *Defence Focus* decided to take the opportunity to talk to a few who are already there and get a glimpse of the range of things they do.



Got you covered: Lance Corporal Aidan Cooper

CLOSE PROTECTION TEAM

Corporals James Goff and Mark Finmore are part of an eight-man team providing close protection to General Lorimer, the Deputy Commander ISAF. It's their job to make sure the boss gets to where he needs to be, safely and on time. Another reservist, Lance Corporal Aidan Cooper, is part of a separate team protecting UK Major General Hockenfull.

When the General travels by helicopter, members of the team accompany him as bodyguards. But road moves involve them in a lot more planning and preparation as they

bear full responsibility for the trip. Nothing can be left to chance. For example, being able to find their way around the chaos of the Kabul streets is essential. Parking up to peruse an A-Z (even if there was one) would not impress the General. "We know the routes extremely well. Obviously certain information might mean that we have to change from our normal route. We're constantly adjusting the way we work," said Corporal Finmore, who is a floor layer in his civvy life.

This means endless recces, checking vehicles and kit, and being constantly aware of the threat situation. In their specially protected Land Cruisers the team can take the boss to most places in Kabul within 30 minutes – but that can easily double if the traffic is bad.

But then, you could argue that the traffic is always bad on roads where road safety lends itself more to kismet than to the Highway Code. "It can be pretty busy. The Kabul road network is hectic compared to what we're used to in the UK. You can find yourself on a road where the road system has been switched around from one day to the next, so you have traffic coming towards you," said Corporal Goff.

And then there are the police checkpoints to deal with. "I can definitely see a noticeable change from when I was here last year on my first tour," said Corporal Goff. "There is a much stronger police presence, they are taking on a lot more responsibility, and the way we move around is affected by that stringency. But that is what you'd expect."

Also on his second tour is Lance Corporal Cooper; however his last was in a different role, as a police adviser in Lashkar Gah. "I returned from operations last October. Then after finishing the eight-week close protection course, which we have all done, I was mobilised for this tour pretty much straight away."

In civvy street, Lance Corporal Cooper works in the private security industry. He fully intends to carry on as a reservist. "For me it's the best of both worlds. I can enjoy my civvy career and still do something I've always wanted to, which is be in the military. I think I've got the balance just right."

AIDE-DE-CAMP

Captain 'Sandy' Rowell is a member of 4th Battalion The Parachute Regiment. By the time he comes to the end of his current contract he will have been on full time reservist service for 23 months.

For 18 months he has been the Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to General Lorimer, initially working for him when the General was still General Officer Commanding 3 (UK) Division, before moving with him out to

Kabul where the General took up his post as Deputy Commander (DCOM) ISAF. "I wanted to deploy, and DCOM, General Lorimer, was looking for a Parachute Regiment ADC. The regular battalions were fairly busy on ops and other commitments, so my name went into the melting pot and I got the job."

It's Captain Rowell's job to keep the General's daily battle rhythm on track. "I'm in the office around 0630 preparing the files for the General and organising everything he will need for that day: things like updates on operations, casualties, equipment, and any briefings for the day's meetings, and things he has asked for to broaden his understanding of an issue."

At the end of each day, which can often be 15 hours later, Captain Rowell has a diary meeting with the General and provides him with the biographies he will need for the following day. Not everyone who asks for time with DCOM will necessarily get it. "Of course it's DCOM's decision who he sees, but I will make suggestions such as 'perhaps Brigadier X would be a more suitable person to talk to'."

Captain Rowell must also look to the middle and far distance for things that will have an impact on the General. In the international environment that is ISAF HQ the ADC has to build up a useful network of contacts. "That's why I say it's all about relationships. You've got to know who to ring, maybe have a quick chat over a brew to find out what's going on." Presumably that includes developing a good relationship with the General? "Yes definitely. During my first interview he did say to me that if we didn't get on he'd get rid of me – but I've survived for 18 months so I must be doing something right. I've got to know when it's the right time to close the door and let him get on with things and when I can go in and

have a frank conversation."

In civvy street, Captain Rowell ran two companies, but he was keen to do more. He wanted to deploy to theatre and decided that taking the Territorial Army commissioning route was the way to go. After successful selection it meant a massive commitment to training, but it has worked out well for him. "I joined to go on operations because, yes, I wanted to serve my country, and would I do it again? Definitely."

MEDIA ADVISERS

Nearing the end of her service in the Royal Naval Reserve, Commander Jane Allen was determined to fit in one more deployment. Now in her 33rd year of service she is based in Kabul, just a few weeks into her post working as Deputy Commander ISAF's media adviser when she spoke to *Defence Focus*.

"This is only my second tour of duty and they don't tend to deploy many people at my rank," she said, "so I really had to push to get it. It probably went in my favour that my last posting to Iraq in 2006 was to do a very similar job."

But why had it taken so long to get that yearned for first deployment? "I joined as a Wren during the Cold War era when the Service was very different. Back then we carried handbags not weapons, wore skirts not trousers, and we didn't go to sea."

As a self-confessed tomboy, Commander Allen admits that if it had been possible her early ambitions were to join the Royal Marines. "I was a real action person so I didn't join the Navy as the only future I could see was as an Admiral's PA, so I went off and did other things. Much later I joined the Reserves, and it really has given me the best of both worlds."

Commander Allen's patience paid off, because when the first deployment did come along, it proved to be an even more rewarding experience than she had hoped. "Iraq at that time was a dangerous place, but I did manage to get out and about," she said. The biggest logistical challenge was to get a group of western and Iraqi journalists from Baghdad out to the oil platforms in the north Persian Gulf, then back via Umm Qasr. "The trip included travelling by road, helicopter and Hercules plus a move to HMS *Echo*. It was quite a marathon," said Commander Allen.

But it also taught her a lot in terms of what it means to be a media adviser on operations. This included playing her part in developing the skills of spokesmen for Iraqi ministries. "We had to train them and make sure that they understood that if they wanted their country to succeed then they needed to coordinate their messages."

To help bed this in, Commander Allen





Picture: Staff Sergeant Bruce Cobbleddick US Army

accompanied a number of them to London for training. “It was very hard work, but it resulted in them writing their own comms plans and putting their tribal differences to one side and to look at things from a national perspective.

“I learned a lot there which is useful here in terms of coordinating efforts across the country and feeding content into a bigger more strategic narrative,” she said. “There is a danger that the British public sees Afghanistan as only being about Helmand province. My tour will be about helping to lift the narrative to show how things are at a national level.”

The life of a media adviser is one of compromise. The aim is to achieve an acceptable balance. On the one hand they have to make sure that the media gets as much access to places and people as possible while making sure that the messages that ISAF want to promulgate also get air time and column inches. It’s not easy, and sometimes it can also mean reminding the boss that the press won’t necessarily write exactly what he likes.

Another seasoned reservist with 24 years and three deployments under his belt, this is Lieutenant Commander Ian King’s first time as a media adviser. He was only weeks into his deployment when he spoke to *Defence Focus*.

An English teacher in his civilian life, Lieutenant Commander King said he enjoys deploying as a reservist as it gives a contrast to civilian life. “I like the positive, disciplined environment where people are willing to do things, often before you have

even asked them.” Over the years he says he has seen massive changes in the roles and opportunities that are open to Royal Navy reservists. “And it’s still expanding; it’s becoming a much more deployable organisation now with all kinds of niche activities. I’ve been to Kosovo, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, and now Afghanistan. I wouldn’t have had the chance to do all that if I hadn’t joined the Reserves.”

POSTAL ORDERLY

Lance Corporal John Stott gets a lot of mail. Every two or three days, depending on transport and the weather, he receives anything from two to 20 bags of it from the airport on the outskirts of Kabul.

As the post orderly for British troops based at ISAF HQ it’s his job to sort it all out. “It takes between a week and 10 days to get here from the UK. It comes via Bastion, but sandstorms, flights getting cancelled or large movements of troops can delay things.”

When he first arrived, things were relatively quiet to start with. “I had one mail drop then nothing for 10 days,” he said. Then a three-week backlog of 56 sacks turned up in one go.

“I just had to lock the door. I was here until about 10 every night just trying to get my head round it all,” he said. Sorting through all that mail in a small office is difficult enough, and it doesn’t help when an item is incorrectly addressed. “If there’s something like that, I put a note on the door so if people are passing and recognise the name they can tell the person. Otherwise

after three weeks I have to send the item back to the UK; there’s just not enough room to store things.”

But the days of letters from loved ones are not what they once were. With email, ebluys and internet access the bulk of the mail today tends to be packages and, rather oddly, pay slips. And then there was the tin of sardines. And, yes, it had come open in the post. And naturally it had been sitting in a bag at Bastion for a few days before reaching Kabul. “So it was mingling by the time it got here,” said Lance Corporal Stott.

He has worked for the Royal Mail for 28 years, and been a reservist for 26. “It’s been a good laugh, and I’ve made some good mates. This is my first proper overseas deployment and it’s harder than I thought it would be. But it’s cooler here than in Bastion, so I feel a bit mollycoddled and lucky to be here.” **DP**



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MAYBE, MINISTER

SOME SAY ADVICE IS THE ONE THING OFFERED FOR FREE THAT NO ONE WANTS. NOT IN THIS CASE WRITES IAN CARR

I'm here at the British Embassy in Kabul as the senior UK adviser to His Excellency Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, the Afghan Minister of Defence for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan," Nick Carter tells me as we sit by the well-watered patch of grass outside his office.

Quite a mouthful. And no doubt different to the way in which he introduced himself when he managed the logistics risk management process for the Chief of Defence Materiel in Abbey Wood. But there is no mistaking the pride with which Nick trots out his title. "This is quite a privileged opportunity, to be able to help very senior people to influence and shape the development of a nation. At home I certainly wouldn't be working so closely with our own minister."

In fact his introduction says a lot about his working environment here and what he has had to adapt to during the 18 months of

his deployment. "Everyone here refers to the ministers as 'His Excellency'. There is a deference and a great deal of respect given to those in senior positions, and the word of the minister is taken extremely seriously," he says. It has clearly rubbed off on him.

Since 2009 the NATO Training Mission has been helping the Afghan MOD by offering advice on training and equipping their army. But now the pace is picking up and the focus is changing. As the Deputy Commander ISAF, Lieutenant General John Lorimer, told *Defence Focus* in an interview earlier that day at ISAF HQ. "The Afghan security forces are effective, they have proven that during the fighting season. They have the numbers, what we are helping them with now is the quality.

"At the highest levels in the ministries of defence and of the interior we need to help them, and the organisations that support them, to become effective departments of state, working on planning,

programming, budgeting, acquisition and human resourcing issues, so that they can sustain themselves in the future."

Nick Carter is one of the people doing that, and one of the issues he is advising on is bringing more civilians into the Afghan MOD. Certainly at the executive level the majority of positions in the department are filled by generals. In fact, at the moment, the only civilian at a senior level is the First Deputy Minister, Enayatullah Nazari.

"There is currently a drive to civilianise about 12,000 posts within the MOD at or around our B2 equivalent level," said Nick.

To convince an initially dubious department of military top brass that there could be a useful role for civilians, our Secretary of State, Philip Hammond, invited His Excellency Mr Mohammadi and some of his team to the UK to take a look. Nick, a civil servant himself, let's not forget, was involved in making it happen. "Mr Mohammadi was stunned at first to learn

Beret beret: Nick Carter at Shindand Air Base with Afghan commanders

that we had more than 60,000 civil servants supporting our Armed Forces working on defence issues. 'Are they all ex-military?' he asked," said Nick. But Mr Mohammadi soon recognised the advantages of bringing in civilians with particular skill sets, who cost less than their military equivalents, who could become subject matter experts working on defence issues where getting engaged in military operations was not part of their job.

All well and good, but importing this idea would of course throw up other issues. Where, for example, would you find suitable recruits? Certainly with an improving educational system Nick argues that there is an intellectual workforce out there to draw on, but the next tricky HR issue would be finding the colonels and generals currently in these jobs something else to do. But as General Lorimer had earlier pointed out, any effective department of state must be able to solve such issues.

Another area that Nick has been helping the Afghans with is developing their budgeting skills. "For the last three or four years the Afghans have failed to spend their budget effectively," he says. "So a lot of work has been done over the last 12 months decentralising accountability and allocating responsibilities so that commanders are responsible for their own acquisitions and how they contract their services and facilities." Developments that, funnily enough, are also being introduced in the UK's MOD.

This is another crucial task for, as the pace of the coalition drawdown gathers, there is a recognition among Afghans that they must be able to support all the systems that are being put in place. "There are a lot of coalition advisers helping them get to grips with how they will identify requirements and then translate them into contractual requirements and budget for them," said Nick.

The basis of much of the advisers work is broadening people's outlooks and encouraging them to think about things in a new way. As adviser to the minister a lot of Nick's time is spent helping his boss as head of the department to operate as a politician rather than as a general. That means helping him to approach things with a different mindset and to get a feel for those things that should demand his attention and then decide what he wants his outcomes to be.

It also involves assisting the minister to understand what Nick calls the political neighbourhood, whether that's locally dealing with other departments, regionally or internationally.

"I help him to understand that his role is strategic and that there are others around



Seats of power: Mr Bismillah Mohammadi, Afghan Minister of Defence (right), meets UK Secretary of State Philip Hammond in London

Picture: Harland Quarrington

who can fight the tactical battles for him. As a previous Chief of Defence Staff it has taken a while for him to come to the fore as the Minister of Defence. But he is quickly recognising what he needs to get from key strategic engagements, whether it's from the ISAF commander, other department heads, or from our own Secretary of State. It's all about helping him and his team to shape things for the good of Afghanistan."

An example of this was when Nick helped the minister to prepare for a trip to Pakistan, possibly the first time any Afghan defence minister has visited that country.

Although the principal point of the trip was to maintain the military-to-military relationship between the two countries during a sensitive diplomatic situation, it was also a useful vehicle for building other bridges too. "So I helped him with speech lines, who he should speak to in addition to the president and the chief of the army, and what he wanted to get out of the trip."

To be in a position to offer such help and advice means building up a high level of trust, and doing that takes time. Which is why these tours are usually 12 months long.


But if you are thinking of giving it a go, you need to be aware that, if Nick is any kind of an example, the job satisfaction can be addictive. Which is why family man Nick offered to extend to 21 months when a successor had not been found as he neared the end of his stint. "Because of the personal relationships that I've built up here, I wanted to avoid any gap as assisting the Afghans depends on continuity."

Nick believes that having more UK civil servants in Kabul would be of tremendous benefit to the Afghans, and advises anyone

interested to consider it seriously.

"My wife Irene and sons have been very supportive, but being here does have its challenges, and its risks. When I'm with the Afghans I always feel safe, but I have been at work when a suicide bomber activated a device outside my office. But I have had the privilege of calling the Afghans I work with friends. So if someone is thinking of doing this I would encourage them. You get the chance to deal with things that are extremely significant. You will experience a different culture and your work will assist a nation in developing its institutional perspective."

No wonder then that, when Nick introduces his job title, he does it with pride and respect.

Nick is due to leave his post in January. If you are interested in applying for this Band B role (or other similar ones at C-B1), contact Andrew Oram in the Ops Directorate (020 7218 8128 or andrew.oram230@mod.uk) 



Heads up: Nick Carter talks to Ian Carr at the British Embassy in Kabul

Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC

MOD'S TOP COP

APPOINTED CHIEF CONSTABLE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE IN MARCH, ALF HITCHCOCK IS STEERING THE FORCE THROUGH CHOPPY WATERS, REPORTS LORRAINE MCBRIDE

DF: Six months after your appointment, what are your impressions of MOD?

AH: When you look at our capability we have a huge amount to contribute internationally through defence. So my first impression was 'wow, this is really something!'

Secondly, working within MOD, HR, financial and resource management, running the business is very different from a county police force so I'm still getting used to how all that works.

I have been impressed by how warm, friendly and helpful everybody is. Military colleagues and civil servants have gone out

of their way to help me understand how the organisation ticks. It's even introduced me to a whole new language because I thought I knew every three-letter policing abbreviation. It's incredible!

DF: What are the main crimes that the MOD Police (MDP) investigate?

AH: It definitely doesn't mirror national trends. Our primary role is counter-terrorism, to protect the nation's defences and critical national infrastructure, whereas in a local police force the focus would be on combating volume crime, robberies and burglaries, and organised criminality.

Secondly, the nature of what we do in MOD means that clearly some people want to protest, but we must make sure that it's done in a lawful way and that protestors are treated appropriately and don't obstruct business. Thirdly, our work with MOD, especially Defence Equipment and Support, is around people who'd defraud us or steal our equipment.

DF: Why join the MDP instead of the Met Police?

AH: If you join the MOD police,

it's because you really want to be part of protecting the nation's most valuable and critical assets.

Once you're in, the world's your oyster. There's an amazing array of things to do apart from the excitement of protecting the nuclear deterrent. We've got tactical support groups trained to a very high level in firearms intervention, a security escort group who escort the movement of critical assets, CID, and the biggest marine policing unit in Britain.

DF: The Armed Forces have seen redundancies and bases closing. Has the MDP also been affected?

AH: We have been affected. We've gone down from 3,500 officers to 2,700. Some bases have closed, which means we've had to move officers, and in some cases their families, because we're a national police force. That causes challenges, professional and personal, organising resources to best effect. To be honest, we're probably six to 12 months away from getting the force in the shape it needs to be. That's going to be difficult to manage because of some people's circumstances and we need to be really sensitive about how we handle that.

Picture: Paul Kemp



MDP marine machine: Chief Constable Hitchcock visits the Clyde Marine Unit

DF: Can the manpower reductions be achieved without leaving the MDP short-staffed or with skill shortages?

AH: We have a really clear plan that involves some reskilling for officers. We've had to move people around and pay overtime to make sure that we're always there to deliver but we've not got a problem doing the job. Because of the changes and disposition of the force, we'll have gaps developing in 2014, so at the end of September an advert went out to recruit 120 MOD police officers to bridge some of those gaps. This is our first recruitment campaign since 2008.

DF: What's your assessment of morale across the force?

AH: I think morale is surprisingly high given that people are being moved, some jobs are changing and some people are reskilling. There's a feeling that the process is taking a very long time to get to where we are.

Now that I've made some decisions to recruit and reset the disposition of the force, there's also a feeling of movement and progress which has created an attitude of 'right, we're the cops, we have a job, let's get on with it!' When I go into staff sessions around the force, they might grumble about kit, but, at the end, they're really upbeat about getting out and doing the job. They can see the end of turbulence, which is very helpful, but it's important that they don't see that as the end of change because good organisations always keep the momentum of change.

DF: Twenty-five years ago, there were 25 MOD buildings in London. Soon there'll be just one. Given the terror threat are we at risk of putting all our eggs in one basket?

AH: No, I met recently with the people who provide the physical security of Main Building and look at the way we protect it. There's a number of layers to this, physical security, intelligence and the likely threat, and policing and getting it right combined with the guard service who check passes. But there's also staff in the building being alert to things like hostile reconnaissance, so people working at the building should tell us if they see something odd. Having one building means we have to make sure that we get it right, and that means being alert to any changes and quickly responding. I think we're in a good place in terms of understanding that threat and how we counter it. I think we can do that even though it is only one location.

DF: What distinguishes the role of the MDP from other forces?

AH: The profile of counter-terrorism (CT),



protecting the defence and critical national infrastructure, is right at the forefront. Elements of the Met do have that, but volume crime is at the top more than the CT threat, which ebbs and flows.

In terms of the cops, we have the same police powers, wear the same uniform, talk to people and get them onside. It's about firm but fair use of powers and doing it with a smile when we can, like the everyday British bobby. But we also have some discrete specialisms.

The only other difference is carrying firearms, to protect valuable assets for the nation. It means that 2,400 of our officers carry firearms out of 2,700. Now in most forces it would only be a maximum of 10 per cent. Other than that, we're cops that do all the things cops do.

DF: You lead on diversity on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers. Do we need more MDP officers from ethnic minorities?

AH: If you look across Britain, you can't just take a particular area or group and say that all the talent is in that pocket. It's spread over gender, sexual orientation, faith and race across the nation. So if we want the very best people, we've got to make the organisation feel right.

We've got a challenge as we don't have enough female and ethnic minority officers. That's important because diversity gives you difference in thinking and understanding, and finally, it's intuitively the right thing to do.

DF: You've been a copper for 36 years. What's been the biggest change?

AH: Four areas; law, culture, crime,

and technology have changed things dramatically. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1986) set a series of rules for how we deal with crime. If you watch *Life on Mars*, they are caricatures, but with a sliver of frightening reality. In 1986 all the rule-bending was wiped out. The Stephen Lawrence enquiry report (1999) made us look at ourselves, the culture and how we investigate crime and work with communities. There are still pockets of problems but it changed the way we police for the better.

The link between serious crime, drugs and guns has grown radically over the years and policing technology has changed massively. If I stopped you on the street I can put your thumbprint on an electronic device and within a second it tells me who you are.

Technology to support policing is fantastic but the internet is also used to handle stolen goods, and with social media I'm gobsmacked at the amount of information people give away on Facebook and Twitter. In Defence you really need to be cautious about what you're giving away.

DF: Has the MDP's role in training the Afghan National Police been a success?

AH: What you find is that in society there's a level of dishonesty and corruption and there is no single country that doesn't have that. However, the more unstable the country is, the more likely it is you'll have corruption.

The work that MOD police are doing alongside the military to bring stabilisation to Afghanistan, to try and create a rule of law and put it in place, is the building block by which corruption is reduced to levels that you see in other more stable countries.

DF: Has the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby changed the approach to security?

AH: I doubt that we've had more intelligence coming in to us but we've had more alertness from the public, particularly from military personnel and families in and around bases. We always say to people that, if you see anything, tell us. It's raised awareness but a horrific incident does do that and we'll keep under review the security arrangements at a whole range of locations across MOD.

DF: Finally, has your name Alf Hitchcock been a help or hindrance in your career?

AH: It is my real name. Some people think that because you're called Hitchcock it's a police nickname, but I am Alfred Hitchcock. It was my dad and granddad's name so I got lumbered with it. I've got two girls so they've escaped! **DF**

SMOOTH OPERATORS

BRINGING BACK VEHICLES AND KIT FROM AFGHANISTAN IS ALL ABOUT GETTING A SMOOTH FLOW WRITES IAN CARR

As the pace of base closures and handovers in Helmand continues, the flow of equipment back through Bastion and out of Afghanistan is well under way.

The good news for the taxpayer is that this is not just the military demonstrating their logistics prowess on a grand scale, but an exercise in accountability, responsibility and value for money.

Lieutenant Colonel Ceri Morton is based in HQ Joint Force Support at Camp Bastion. She is responsible for all the redeployment that takes place within Afghanistan. "As personnel redeploy, so the kit and the equipment they were using is

redeployed in the correct form or status, or it is disposed of properly," she explains.

"It means that all operational accounts are reconciled and closed and all real estate is either handed over to the legal owners or transferred to Afghan institutions in a responsible way."

When *Defence Focus* was here a year ago, a tour of the real estate within Camp Bastion, set aside to deal with all the stuff that would be rolling in through the camp gates, required a good imagination.

The guided tour involved peering through fences at huge dusty areas and being told 'this is where the ISOs (containers) will be going; over there

vehicles will be parked before they are brought forward for servicing and maintenance; that's where they will be bio-washed'. It all seemed, to a civilian who has enormous trouble sorting out a garden shed, a hugely daunting task.

But now that redeployment is in full swing, you need no vivid imagination. There it all is, and it's all working. There are containers full of properly sorted out kit. Rows of palletised Jackals, and even the body of a Chinook helicopter, are all waiting on the tarmac to start the journey home.

This time last year, the bio-wash where vehicles are scrupulously pressure-washed to rigorous DEFRA standards,

Picture: Corporal Jamie Peters RLC



Day of the Jackal: the high mobility armoured vehicles ready for loading

ridding them of any nasties that they may have picked up during their time in the sand, was just a scrape in the ground. Now it's working often round the clock on a three-shift system. It needs to when you consider that it can take 12 hours to thoroughly clean a large container truck, and that by the end of 2014 something like 2,720 vehicles will have gone through the system.

Each step of the process to get kit from the front line back to the UK has been carefully thought through. "A lot of planning has gone into this, not just the space that's required, but also the linear design," said Major Stuart Ferguson, Officer Commanding Reverse Support Chain (RSC) Squadron. "It's all been designed so that materiel flows in, through and out again smoothly."

But we shouldn't be surprised. After all, the British military have been breaking down bases for centuries, and lessons have been learned from Iraq. Stretched out before us in Bastion is the result. It all seems very logical.

"A pan-defence planning group in the UK created and has overseen all of this," said Lieutenant Colonel Morton. "It involved detailed planning in theatre too by Joint Force Support and an investment of around \$11m in the reverse supply chain infrastructure to make it happen. We've got a load-handling area for when the shipping containers of kit come back in, we have weighbridges, an airside storage facility and a cargo yard all set up deliberately."

SURPLUS TO REQUIREMENTS

This is the first stage of what is a three-stage process, possibly the biggest logistical challenge in a generation.

Stage one starts when an operational commander decides that a piece of equipment or a vehicle is surplus to requirements in theatre. "It's declared as surplus by the pan-defence planning committee in the UK," said Lieutenant Colonel Morton.

A sub-set of that committee then considers whether that item will be needed for future operations. "No decisions are made about any of this in theatre. If it is needed, the questions then asked are how much will it cost to bring back? What state is it likely to be in? Would it be cheaper to dispose of it? If that's the answer, we figure out the best way of going about it. We reconsume wherever we can. We eat it, fire it, put it in our fuel tanks, use up spares before ordering more."

But the logistics team (loggies) get an extra layer of job satisfaction. Because although redeploying kit might be the main activity, supporting operations is still the main effort. So they have to keep



On track: civilians manifesting loads ready for onward movement from Camp Bastion

a keen eye on kit movements both in and out of theatre. They must make sure that the troops have all the beans, bullets and bandages they need.

Lieutenant Colonel Morton is professionally relaxed about that. Logistics, she is keen to point out, is a science not an art. So while no extra kit will be flown into Afghanistan if there is no clear need, stocks will match the capability that is needed on the ground. "We've been in Afghanistan for more than 10 years, so we pretty much know what the demand is here, based on the tasks the units have to perform. Our profiles and our systems mean we can track items and identify and manage surpluses pretty effectively."

The second stage is moving all the equipment and vehicles out of Afghanistan to their next destination. This activity is owned by PJHQ. The final stage is what happens to it all when it arrives at the strategic base, its final destination. But this part of the story all begins at the forward bases that are closing down, when everything is given its first sorting through.

"We deploy a specialist logistics team forward to advise the bases. Effectively everything is sorted into piles such as equipment spares, ammunition, and so

on," said Major Ferguson. "Then they sort it into piles, for example, things that it is really important that we don't lose track of, what is going to be needed right up to the last minute, and things deemed ACTO – attractive to criminals and terrorist organisations. This includes things like batteries and old fire extinguishers which could be used by insurgents to make IEDs."

Then, in a similar way to which it first arrived, delivered by combat logistic patrols, it all finds its way back to Bastion where further sorting takes place and more experts are on hand to give advice.

Teams of subject matter experts from the depots at Bicester and Donnington and people with expertise in weapons and dangerous goods, such as paints and gases, are on hand to offer advice with the sorting and checking.

"There may be some doubt about a particular item and we can get it from the horse's mouth; 'well, if you did send that all the way back to the UK, it would only get disposed of, it wouldn't go back on the shelf' so we can then dispose of it here saving the cost of transport" said Major Ferguson.

Up to this point the kit is still the responsibility of the unit that owned it. Once the amount and condition of the returned



Spray gun: a cargo truck goes through the bio-wash



Not winging it: a Chinook is prepared for its trip on a 747

kit has been agreed, it is signed off and is no longer the responsibility of the unit. It is this level of accountability which has helped to avoid the problem that has reared its head in the past, where soldiers, eager to get away, resort to throwing things into an ISO for the loggies to sort out later.

"Some of my team have experienced returns from other operations where that's happened, but this has been conducted entirely differently," said Mick Thorn, one of the RSC experts.

Over at the Theatre Equipment Support Group light engineering company workshops, the same smooth thinking is being applied to the vehicles leaving theatre. This is the Bastion based hub of the engineering expertise for servicing and upgrading vehicles in theatre.

During periods of what the troops call normal jogging, vehicles are maintained as far forward as possible. But vehicles that are leaving theatre get their final servicing here. "We know what's going to be coming in," said officer commanding, Major David Smith. "We know what the next tour (Herrick 19) will need. The bandwidth of our activity is redeployment now. But it doesn't matter to us. Whether we are working on a vehicle that's going back to the front or going home, we have plenty of experience working on all vehicles across the fleet so we have nothing to fear."

What matters here, as it does at every stage of redeployment, is maintaining a smooth flow of work. When their tour began, due to the pace of base closures, there was a bow wave of vehicles for the engineers to attend to and bring up to standard.

"We deployed with fewer headcount," said Major Smith, "but we brought a surge of 230 vehicle mechanics and other trades with us to deal with the backlog of vehicles. We took over 130 vehicles as part of the redeployment. It took us about six weeks

to deal with the backlog. It's been a real mixture but what we are working on now is the last wave of Jackals and Coyotes being pushed through by the end of September."

Over at the cargo ready to move yard, duty air movements officer Flight Lieutenant Chris Ashby is one of the last people to wave all these vehicles and pallets of kit goodbye as they leave theatre. "We handle up to 10,000 passenger movements a month, so our redeployment has to fit within that," he said, "which means we have to have a close relationship with the RSC Squadron to supply us with the vehicles and freight leaving theatre."

Each C-17 transporter aircraft can cope with between two and four vehicles. "Working at full tilt we are shifting about 150 vehicles a month. Between the beginning of October 2012 and the end of July this year we've done 1,000 vehicles and major pieces of equipment," said Lieutenant Colonel Morton.

"We are moving about 700 pallets of kit a month. Every other day we move


a 747's worth of freight in and out of theatre. We are bringing in things like food and sending out around 80 tonnes, that's 42 pallets of equipment every two days," said Flight Lieutenant Ashby. "But we are within our capacity."

To make it all work, hard standing areas have been specially laid down for the freight, and dust-free areas created for the vehicles prepared for redeployment. "We have space for about 30 vehicles, that's inbound as well as outbound, so we don't want anything sitting here for long, nobody wants that," said Flight Lieutenant Ashby.

Up to the end of September a major task was returning the Jackal vehicles, two-at-a-time on each 747 run. To speed up the preloading process, a bespoke method for palletising and strapping down the vehicles was introduced satisfying international air transport regulations. "We also built a ramp so that vehicles up to 10 tonnes in weight can drive up onto a special outsized pallet which can then go straight onto one of our aircraft freight loading vehicles," said Flight Lieutenant Ashby.

"We are at the end of a very long line, which is why it's so important that we keep in close touch with the Joint Force Support people so we get the correct flow and the right balance of kit and vehicles flowing through," he added.

Lieutenant Colonel Morton may have overall responsibility for co-ordinating all this, but, as she is keen to point out, redeployment on this scale is a team sport. "It's the responsibility of every unit in theatre and every deployed command," she said.

But from the evidence on the ground, it looks like everyone in that very long line has responded to that challenge and are keen to be seen as smooth operators. 



Truck stop: a mechanic works on a Husky

AN ACT OF BRAVERY

A SOLDIER HAS BEEN HONOURED AT THIS YEAR'S PRIDE OF BRITAIN AWARDS. REPORT BY LEIGH HAMILTON

Lance Corporal Matthew Wilson from 2nd Battalion The Rifles was recently presented with the Military Special Recognition Award at the 2013 Pride of Britain ceremony in London.

Lance Corporal Wilson was singled out for an award following an enemy attack while he was attached to the Queen's Dragoon Guards in Afghanistan in 2011.

While on patrol, Lance Corporal Wilson's reconnaissance group was ambushed by a strong insurgent force in Helmand province. The enemy fighters launched an intense attack, supported by grenades and a sniper taking aim at the British troops, resulting in one sustaining a critical injury.

Without any cover, Lance Corporal Wilson pushed forward to help his stricken comrade, running across open ground in full view of the enemy. As he ran, one of the sniper's bullets smashed into his helmet, knocking him out for 30 seconds.

When he came to, he saw that a British helicopter trying to rescue casualties was under fire. Lance Corporal Wilson ran 50 metres across open ground to attack the enemy and draw fire away from the helicopter.

Lance Corporal Wilson made it to protective cover when an Apache attack helicopter arrived at the scene to give cover as they pulled back into a nearby compound. The injured comrade Lance Corporal Wilson had risked his life for was rescued.

After climbing onto the compound wall, Lance Corporal Wilson helped launch a counter-attack and neutralise the enemy threat.

He said: "When I came to eventually I was a bit dazed and I moved forward a bit more and I was able to get eyes on the enemy, the actual sniper that was giving us grief, and I got some rounds down and he was on the back foot."

Thinking back to that moment when he risked his life, Lance Corporal Wilson said it's all part of the job: "You know you're going to get shot at and you know dangerous things are going to happen. How you react changes depending on the situation. Everyone knows how



Winning smile: Lance Corporal Matthew Wilson was given the Pride of Britain Military Special Recognition Award


dangerous it's going to be.

"I do believe that any other soldier in my shoes would have done the same thing."

Being at the Pride of Britain Awards was a world away from his experience in Afghanistan, yet Lance Corporal

Wilson dedicated his award to his fellow soldiers: "I feel like I do deserve it, but I feel that this is an award for everyone, all the guys I was with. It's like I'm doing it for them not just for me."

Lance Corporal Wilson received his award from singer Katherine Jenkins and comedian Michael McIntyre. Miss Jenkins said: "I'm humbled by men and women who go to Afghanistan. I've been there and I go for a day; they're there for months and months. To do something like that is insane and beyond what we can really think about. I think Matthew's awesome, he deserves all of this recognition."

Mr McIntyre added: "It's an absolute honour to meet Matthew who I'm completely in awe of. I feel a bit embarrassed because I don't deserve to be here and it doesn't make sense. I'm a very lazy fat man and he is a heroic man who fights for his country and runs towards gun fire, gets shot in the head and then gets up." 



Honoured: Lance Corporal Matthew Wilson with Katherine Jenkins and Michael McIntyre

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

ARMY RESERVIST COLONEL HEIDI DOUGHTY EXPLAINS HOW HER MILITARY EXPERIENCE HAS BENEFITED NOT ONLY HER CAREER BUT ALSO HER EMPLOYER

Holding down one job for most people is a challenge. For a reservist, holding down a job and fulfilling their military obligations is par for the course. The UK's Reserve Forces play a vital part in our nation's defence and are expected to take part in training, deploy on operations and, for some, hold an appointment within the Ministry of Defence.

Colonel Heidi Doughty is a doctor and a reservist. She is a blood specialist who spends half of her working life as a consultant in transfusion medicine for NHS Blood and Transplant, a Special Health

Authority dedicated to saving and improving lives through the wide range of services they provide to the NHS. NHS Blood and Transplant provides a safe and reliable supply of blood components, diagnostic services and stem cell services to hospitals in England and North Wales and tissue and solid organs to hospitals across the UK.

For the other 50 per cent of her time, Colonel Doughty is a consultant advisor in transfusion to MOD. Her role has seen her travel to many countries, including Afghanistan and Iraq.

Although a reservist, Colonel Doughty explained that her position isn't exactly

run of the mill: "I'm slightly unusual in that half of my job is paid for by MOD as part of a novel contract to provide specialist services by NHS Blood and Transplant."

Reservists have played an important role in the Defence Medical Services (DMS) for many years and are represented in most jobs and at all ranks, including at a senior level. Colonel Doughty said: "There are a number of senior doctors acting as medical consultant advisors who are also reservists. We work closely together with our regular colleagues to deliver the best for patients."

Reaching the heady heights of a senior MOD doctor's appointment hasn't come to

Picture: Sergeant Rupert Frere



Mercy dash: lessons learned in Afghanistan have been transferred to the NHS [picture shows training exercise]

Colonel Doughty overnight. She joined the Officer Training Corps (OTC) in 1981 and signing up to be a reserve was a no-brainer as far as she was concerned: "I come from a military family, my mother, father and brother were all regulars. It was very much a part of my childhood and something that I was very familiar and comfortable with.

"Having started to study medicine in London, it just struck me as something of an interesting thing to do while I was a student. In med school you tend to spend most of your time with other medical students whereas actually the OTC allowed me to meet and work with people from all sorts of backgrounds as well as learn new skills."

Colonel Doughty left the OTC to join the then Territorial Army in 1984 which saw her start her military medicine career at the same time that her civilian career took off. She said: "As a junior officer you're really trying to just secure your basic military skills, but, as you become more senior in your own civilian profession, you can increasingly apply those skills and knowledge to military medicine and certainly since about 2002 my military role and my civilian role have been very similar and work well together."

Change is being witnessed throughout the UK Armed Forces and greater emphasis is being put on the Reserve Forces. The aim is that, by 2020, reservists will be a fully integrated component of the Whole Force and will routinely deploy as part of all military operations.

Colonel Doughty herself has been on several operations. In 2002 she worked for a month in Kabul in a small team as part of an ISAF initiative to rebuild medical services for the local Afghan community.

Her project was to support the local blood service with equipment, education and help to identify their further needs. "There were so many knowledgeable people who couldn't apply their training due to their circumstances, having little in the way of electricity, running water or consumables. There you have skilled doctors, nurses and laboratory technicians who need specialist support from the international community. I think it makes sense that there is going to be an increasing role for reserves within that humanitarian role," she said.

As well as environmental challenges, Colonel Doughty had to ensure that she and her team were culturally sensitive while she was in Kabul. "I think, so long as you go in being mindful of their situation and respecting them both professionally and personally, doctor to doctor, nurse to nurse, I think you can cross all sorts of cultural and language barriers. You have that shared



Healthy life balance: Colonel Heidi Doughty has been an Army reservist for 30 years

background and shared focus on doing the very best for your patients."

The following year Colonel Doughty was part of a field hospital deployed to Iraq for four months as part of Operation Telic where she was a haematologist working as part of pathology team in a tented military field hospital. More recently she has been involved in setting up specialist projects in Afghanistan and Iraq and further developing the military transfusion services.

Her experience on operations has proved to be a rewarding experience that has left her with a deep sense of pride. In addition, she said: "I'm very proud of the partnership work where we've worked closely together with others to improve services. For instance, my civilian colleagues and the military transfusion teams have worked together to provide solutions, whether it's blood to the battlefield or producing new capabilities.

"Creating that partnership and sharing knowledge is very satisfying. Watching your teams grow and deliver and bringing that partnership between military and civilian healthcare providers alive is inspiring"

Over the years, Colonel Doughty has seen several military medical lessons transferred to the NHS which have changed their way of working. One such lesson is the use of transfusion in trauma.

"DMS has revolutionised the way that we support the critically injured, not just the way we resuscitate them, but the way we use blood in resuscitation, and that's something that has certainly come into civilian practice.

"I also think we've learned a lot about using blood in the pre-hospital environment so we can safely transport blood by helicopter. For example, if we have a civilian medical team attending someone who is critically injured and cannot be quickly taken to the hospital, we can now support them with blood using the practical lessons learned in military practice."


Colonel Doughty has also learned other skills from her military career which

are transferable to her civilian workplace. Colonel Doughty believes that the training a reserve receives is useful not only for the individual, but is also beneficial for employers: "The quality of training the reserves receive would almost certainly benefit most people in terms of teamwork and management skills. In addition, the experience of successfully working under pressure in difficult environments gives you greater confidence in both your careers.

"I think the attitudes that most people take away from having been exposed to both the reserve training and the experience gained bring incredible benefits to the civilian workplace. So long as both parties understand what is required and people give appropriate notice, then I think there are enormous benefits for employers and individuals."

With nearly 30 years of reserve experience under her belt, Colonel Doughty can look back on a very varied and colourful career with satisfaction. She said: "It's been fabulous and it's been very varied. Sometimes it's been quite challenging but on the other hand it's been rewarding and I've made a lot of good friends."

Looking to the future with both her NHS and MOD hats on, Colonel Doughty still has plenty of plans. "In terms of my Army career, I'm finishing three years in my appointment as a defence consultant advisor. I want to continue supporting defence both as a blood specialist but also supporting other areas such as recruiting and veterans care. Whether they are regulars or reserves, I think it's just an extraordinary community of people."

Royal Navy, Army and RAF Reserves are recruiting now for exciting new roles in Defence. Find out more at www.gov.uk/joining-the-reserve-forces 

If you're generally healthy and aged 17 or over, do something amazing.... give blood. www.blood.co.uk



Team triumph: Battle Back defeats the US Wounded Warrior team

GOLF, GUTS AND GLORY

BATTLE BACK RETAIN CAPTAIN PIETSCH TROPHY, BEATING US WOUNDED WARRIORS. REPORT BY LORRAINE MCBRIDE

Faldo, Nicklaus, Montgomerie, Els, Norman, Trevino and Langer are just some of the golfing superstar names that grace the World Golf Hall of Fame in St Augustine, Florida. Last month though, the venue prepared itself for a very different brand of hero.

Ten golfers from the British Armed Forces' Battle Back initiative flew across the Atlantic to defend the Captain Pietsch Trophy against a team from the Wounded

Warrior project - the US equivalent of our Help for Heroes, albeit on a much larger scale. They raise funds and awareness for the plight of injured Service personnel.

The term "putting your body on the line" has long been a sporting cliché, and the teams at the Slammer and Squire Course on 11 September have certainly had their lives shaped by personal sacrifice and adversity.

Battle Back team manager Lieutenant

Colonel Tristan Crew explained that the Pietsch Trophy is the wounded serviceman's version of the Ryder Cup, and no less fiercely contested.

Tristan said: "It's very competitive and getting more and more so. This year it was extremely professional."

Many Battle Back players are injured servicemen from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they also select military personnel who have an illness or injury that



Iron will: Major Bernie Broad sunk the winning putt



Above par: Lieutenant Colonel Tristan Crew manages Battle Back's golfers

Pictures (except main): Corporal Richard Cave RLC

takes a lifetime of adjustment. Or as Tristan said; "So if you've had a minor ankle sprain, you would not qualify." He cited team captain Chief Technician Keith Davies, who survived a brain tumour, and said the team runs the whole gamut from the seriously ill to the seriously injured.

But while the nature of injury and illness varies enormously, it is clear that as least as much courage, dedication, raw talent and determination runs through this team as through the reigning Ryder Cup team.

Asked to describe the importance of golf in their rehabilitation, Tristan said in a heartbeat: "Absolutely huge. It is arguably Battle Back's most successful sport."

Tristan is grateful to Help for Heroes and the Endeavour Fund for sponsoring the trip. As a physiotherapist at Headley Court, Tristan reels off the physical benefits that

golf can bring. "If you're swinging a club when your balance is already compromised, walking the course or getting in and out of bunkers, it's obviously tough. But the more I get involved with golf, the more I see the psychological benefits that are just as, if not more, important.

"It builds self-esteem and confidence and the handicap system means that players can compete against able-bodied or disabled individuals, so it's competitive at every level."

Tristan believes that it doesn't take long for players to get hooked. "Golf is hugely addictive. When you play, all you think about is getting that little white ball around the course and it gives your mind a massive break from the worries of day-to-day life."

Back to the action, this was the third time the teams had met in the history of the competition, with the standings at one apiece. Battle Back was the holder of the trophy after a thrilling encounter in 2012 and Tristan said that the Battle Back team's preparation couldn't have gone better.

With confidence high, the three-day tournament started with the four-ball format. The Battle Back team made short shrift of their

US opponents, taking the first day 4-1.

Day two saw the teams compete in Greensomes, which sees golfers in teams of two using one ball.

Chief Technician Keith Davies displayed masterly captaincy, selecting the perfect pairings to ensure that Battle Back would be unbeaten, posting a 4½ - ½ scoreline.

With an 8½ - 1½ lead, the Battle Back team just needed 1½ points to retain the trophy. The final day (singles matchplay) saw the Wounded Warrior team post three of the first four points on the board, but Major Bernie Broad held his nerve and took the winning putt.

The final day was won again by Battle Back 6-4 which set the overall final score at 14½ - 5½.

"A fantastic performance, the team are obviously delighted," said Chief Technician Davies, adding that they're now setting their sights on the return fixture at Walton Heath Golf Club in Surrey in September 2014.

Between hours of hard-fought golf, the Wounded Warrior programme also provided an educational dimension, laying on seminars on nutrition and goal-setting, but nothing diluted the goal of golfing success.

Battle Back's delighted team manager said: "To post this kind of victory is credit to the commitment and professionalism of this team of golfers. I'm very proud of what they've achieved here and throughout the year." **DF**



SUDOKU

		7			1	4		
2		4		7				
			4					2
	7			8	4			9
		5				8		
	4		6	3				2
6					7			
				9		7		5
		8	2			3		

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

8	5	1	4	7	9	3	2	6
9	2	3	1	6	5	4	7	8
4	7	6	8	3	2	5	1	9
5	8	7	6	2	4	1	9	3
1	6	4	9	8	3	2	5	7
2	3	9	5	1	7	8	6	4
7	4	2	3	5	6	9	8	1
6	9	8	2	4	1	7	3	5
3	1	5	7	9	8	6	4	2

Solution to the September 2013 puzzle

CHESS



Compiled by: Carl Portman

We all feel under pressure at times; at work, at home, and certainly on the chess board. This pressure does not discriminate. It affects beginners and masters alike but it is how we deal with it that matters.

In terms of chess it brings out the very best in some people – playing better under pressure than if there were none. For others it reduces them to a nervous wreck at the board, with sweaty palms, twitching legs and a rapid fire heartbeat.

Pressure affects our judgement and subsequently how we make decisions – again not just at a chessboard.

Time pressure is a huge factor in chess. One can sit for several hours nursing a position only to blow it all in the last five minutes. This is tantamount to a criminal act and it hurts for days and weeks after, but at least it can happen to your opponent also.

Study the position (right) from the game Shimanov-Kamsky from the 2013 FIDE World Cup. White just played the horrible 20.Rf2 here. Kamsky (under pressure) replied 20...Ng3, which was an



astonishing blunder. He had two better options – give me one (or both) of them for a nice chess book prize kindly donated by Chess & Bridge, London.

Send your answers to me at carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk please.

The answer to September's problem was 1...Qxh2+! (full marks also for 1...Qg2+) 2.Kxh2 Rxf2+ 3.Kg1 Rf1+ 4.Kg2 R(8)-f2 mate. The winner will be announced.

Winner of August's problem was Alan Nelson, 14th Regiment Royal Artillery, Larkhill.

TOPICAL CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 7. _____ 13, another popular film directed by 9 Down (6)
- 8. Take That star who will release a solo album in November (6)
- 10. Manages with limited resources (5,2)
- 11. Actress who plays Princess Diana in the new movie *Diana* (5)
- 12. Children's playthings (4)
- 13. Large marine mammal with a blowhole on top of its head for breathing (5)
- 17. Novelist who wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (5)
- 18. And 14 Down. Rock group which had Mark Knopfler as its lead vocalist and guitarist (4,7)
- 22. Country subject to a chemical weapons attack earlier this year (5)
- 23. Crime writer whose best-known character is Chief Inspector Wexford (7)
- 24. Australia's new Prime Minister (6)
- 25. And 2 Down. Rock group whose new album *AM* entered the charts at No 1 (6,7)



DOWN

- 1. Large extinct elephant (7)
- 2. See 25 Across
- 3. Glenn, whose hit films include *Fatal Attraction*, *Hamlet* and *101 Dalmatians* (5)
- 4. Narrow walkway used by models (7)
- 5. Tall, narrow champagne glass (5)
- 6. Roger Federer's nationality (5)
- 9. Director of the 2013 film *Rush* about F1 drivers Hunt and Lauda (3,6)

- 14. See 18 Across
- 15. *Life*, _____ and the pursuit of Happiness, a well-known phrase in the United States Declaration of Independence (7)
- 16. Exact copy of something (7)
- 19. Egyptian city near two dams across the Nile (5)
- 20. Crustaceans with pincers (5)
- 21. Unpleasant sleeping sound (5)

SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- 1. Marmoth 2. Monkeys
 - 3. Close 4. Catwalk
 - 5. Flute 6. Swiss
 - 9. Ron Howard 14. Straits
 - 15. Liberty 16. Replica
 - 19. Aswan 20. Crabs 21. Snore
- Down**
- 24. Abbott 25. Arctic
 - 18. Dire 22. Syria 23. Rendell
 - 12. Toys 13. Whale 17. Stowe
 - 10. Makes Do 11. Watts
 - 7. Apollo 8. Barlow
- Across**



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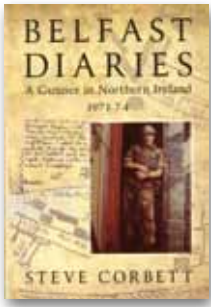
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UNITED KINGDOM





BELFAST DIARIES

A Gunner in Northern Ireland 1971-74

By Steve Corbett, Casemate UK, £16.95

WITH CHILLING reality, author Steve Corbett conveys the adrenaline, fear and violence of being shot at and caught in the middle of a riot, thugs screaming for your blood,

in 1970s Northern Ireland. Over 220 pages, the former army gunner impresses the pressures, exhaustion, sleep deprivation and endless patrols that he and comrades



faced in the line of duty often under a 'vicious volley of rocks and bottles'. It was those pressures that caused him to fire his riot gun for the first time in anger, but, as he explained, with no lasting regret.

"I never gave a thought to what injuries I may have inflicted on him, but to be honest I wasn't bothered either. I didn't want to be in Ireland, and he was making it clear I wasn't welcome."

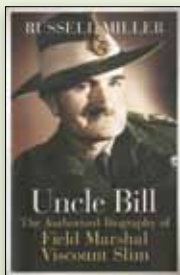
The author has documented his recollections of his tour in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Joining up at just 17, Corbett was still in his teens when he was posted to Andersontown. The irony that many soldiers lost their lives over 30 years, mainly at the hands of the very people they were sent to protect, is not lost.

"We made mistakes and we sometimes lashed out in retaliation while being subjected to extreme provocation," writes Corbett. "Everyone has their limit of patience and many of us were

taken beyond that on the streets of Belfast."

This book also gives readers an insight into how life can change in the blink of an eye. In one incident, two soldiers travelling in a Land Rover were shot and seriously wounded when a gunman ambushed an army patrol near Belfast. What adds to the injustice is that when the crew climbed into the Land Rover, soldier Fred James came out to find that his mate Brummie had jumped into the seat he always used – and he wouldn't budge for anyone despite Fred's pleas. As they approached a junction, shots rang out, and when Fred turned around to see what was happening, he took two shots in the back.

Bitter Fred ended up paralysed from the waist down and never walked again. Perhaps unreasonably, he always blamed Brummie, but this illustration sums up the inexplicably cruel random nature of fate that was the hallmark of deployment in a war zone. **DP**



Uncle Bill

The Authorised Biography of Field Marshal Viscount Slim

By Russell Miller, Orion Books, £25

A 2011 poll nominated Bill Slim as Britain's greatest general. Had the modest Slim been alive, he would have been amazed. Of all the plaudits heaped on him, the one he valued most was the affectionate nickname bestowed by his troops, 'Uncle Bill'. Not just an armchair general, he was seriously wounded twice in Gallipoli and Mesopotamia and awarded the Military Cross in 1918. Promoted in the Second World War, he was sent to Burma to command the First Burma Corps. Through sheer

leadership, Slim drove the enemy out of Burma to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. Slim rose from lance corporal to field marshal. He lifted morale by simply spending time with soldiers and could convey high ideals in simple language, often in Gurkhali. Where he succeeded most was to make everyone from the highest rank to the most lowly soldier feel they were an integral part of a great war machine. That he succeeded is a mark not just of a supreme tactician but a humane, charismatic leader. **DP**



The Big Book of Flight

By Rowland White, Bantam Press, £20

THIS ISN'T just another book about aircraft, military or otherwise. Even the author acknowledges 'as a reference book it's neither comprehensive nor necessarily useful'. But contained within its 300-odd pages are golden nuggets of information as diverse as the story of Icarus and the required signals to park an airliner. There are also Blue Peter-style projects such as how to make a bottle rocket which will appeal to children. I particularly enjoyed the 'how high do things fly' table.

It is written with verve and enthusiasm, and illustrated with shed-loads of pictures, including a chapter featuring the insignia of the world's air forces. Again from the author's perspective, 'the only real criterion for inclusion [in the book] was whether something was interesting' – and as subjective as that is, I guarantee you'll find something that will catch your eye. And with that in mind, it will make an ideal Christmas gift for the enquiring minds within your family. **DP**

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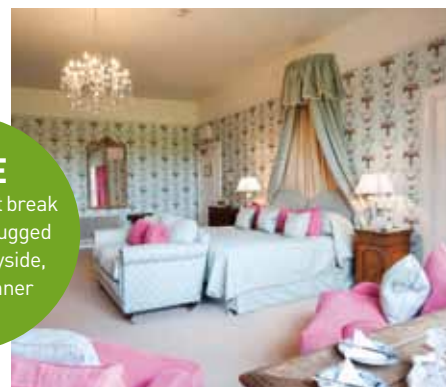
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Breakdown Cover





PRIZE
Win a two-night break for two in the rugged Welsh countryside, including dinner

WONDER OF WALES

One lucky reader will win a two-night stay for two at Llangloed Hall, Mid Wales, including dinner

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So successful was the recent refurbishment, coupled with exceptional commitment to the finest hospitality, that the AA chose Llangloed Hall as Hotel of the Year, Wales 2013/14. At the same time the hotel was awarded the AA Inspectors' Choice with four Red Stars.

The 23 stunning luxury bedrooms await guests seeking a retreat nestled in the enchanting Wye Valley. An at home feeling is guaranteed in a hotel with no reception desk and a 24-hour honesty bar.

Food has also played a major part in the hotel's success and head chef Nick Brodie and his team create dishes from the finest local produce, flavoured with herbs picked from the hotel's organic kitchen garden. www.llangoedhall.co.uk

READERS' OFFER

You can enjoy a B&B stay between 1 November 2013 and 28 February 2014 from £49.50 per person based on two sharing mid-week and from £62.50 based on two sharing Friday/Saturday. Offer excludes Christmas and New Year and is subject to availability.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The prize must be booked in advance and taken by November 2014. The stay includes dinner on one evening with a bottle of house wine and daily breakfast.

TO WIN

Email your name, address and phone number to dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by 17 November. Put Wales in the subject line.

DEMONIC DIABLO III

Unleash hell in your sitting room with the console launch of Diablo III



PRIZE
Win a 500GB PlayStation 3 and a copy of Diablo III. Plus five copies of the game

The endless fiery battle between the high heavens and burning hells is raging anew with Blizzard Entertainment's epic dungeon crawler Diablo III, now out on PlayStation 3.

Twenty years have passed since the Prime Evils were defeated and banished from the world of Sanctuary. Now, you must return to where it all began – the town of Tristram – and investigate rumours of a fallen star, an omen that the end times have begun. Reforged for console, Diablo III lets up to four players adventure through the demonically besieged world of Sanctuary, battling hordes of monsters

and horrific bosses in a quest to destroy the evil demon Diablo.

To celebrate the console launch of Diablo III, we're giving one lucky reader the chance to win a 500GB PlayStation 3 and a copy of Diablo III worth £400. We're also giving away five copies of the game for runners up.

TO WIN

Who wouldn't want to win a Playstation 3 and the addictive Diablo III? Email your name, address and phone number to dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by the closing date of 17 November. Don't forget to enter PlayStation 3 in the subject line.



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 **BOEING**

MIGRAINE MISERY

MIGRAINES AFFECT MORE WOMEN THAN MEN BUT HELP IS AT HAND FOR ALL

Migraines are severe headaches that often have a number of associated symptoms such as nausea, increased sensitivity and visual problems. A World Health Organisation report described migraine as one of the four most disabling chronic medical disorders.

Migraines are common, affecting about one in four women and one in 12 men in the UK. It is thought that hormonal influences may be the reason why migraines affect more women than men. For example, some women find that migraine attacks are more frequent around the time of their period. However, this association has not been fully proven.

Approximately nine million people in the UK suffer from migraine, which is by far the most common neurological condition. About 80 per cent of those – some 7.2 million – have an attack at least once a month.

It is possible for migraines to begin later in life but it is more common for the condition to begin in childhood or as a young adult. About nine out of 10 people who experience migraines have their first attack before they are 40 years old. Some people experience several migraines in a week, while other people only experience a

migraine occasionally. It is possible for years to pass between migraine attacks.

During an attack, the blood vessels in the brain dilate and then draw together with stimulation of nerve endings near the affected blood vessels. These changes to the blood vessels are probably what cause the pain, but migraine is still a condition that is poorly understood. Foods such as cheese, chocolate, wine or citrus fruits can cause migraine attacks. Other factors that may trigger an attack include exercise, anxiety, stress, bright lights, loud noise, the contraceptive pill and travel.

There are two types of migraine, classical and common. A classical migraine is when the headache includes symptoms of aura (see Stages of Migraine section). A common migraine is when a person does not experience aura symptoms.

Painkillers such as paracetamol or aspirin and anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen are most commonly used to treat a migraine. Painkillers are usually the first method of treatment for migraine and they tend to be more effective if they are taken at the first signs of a migraine attack. This gives them time to absorb into your bloodstream and ease your symptoms. Soluble painkillers are a good choice because they are absorbed quickly by your body. If unable to swallow painkillers due to nausea or vomiting, suppositories may be a better option.

If nausea is a symptom of your migraine, you can take anti-sickness medicines. These can be prescribed by your GP and can be taken alongside painkillers. There are a number of combination medicines for migraine that you can buy over-the-counter at your local pharmacy. These contain both painkillers and anti-sickness medicines.

If ordinary painkillers are not helping to relieve migraine symptoms, triptan medicines might be the next option. Some triptan medicines, such as sumatriptan, are available without prescription over-the-counter; other triptan medicines will require a prescription from your GP.


Triptan medicines are not the same as painkillers. They make the blood vessels around the brain contract. This combats the dilating (widening) of blood vessels that is believed to be part of the migraine process. Triptans are available in the form of tablets, injections and nasal sprays.

Many sufferers develop their own methods of dealing with a migraine, such as resting in a quiet, darkened room and trying to sleep if possible. Placing a hot



or cold compress to your head can be effective, as can applying pressure to the pulse points on the side of your forehead or neck.

FOR MORE

www.migraine.org.uk – The Migraine Action Association (formerly the British Migraine Association) is a registered charity aimed at helping migraine sufferers. 

STAGES OF MIGRAINE

There are five distinct stages to migraine, although not everyone experiences every stage:

- 1. 'Prodromal' (pre-headache) stage.** Some people experience changes in mood, energy levels, behaviour and appetite, and sometimes aches, hours or even days before an attack.
- 2. Aura.** In about one in six cases, a migraine is preceded by an aura. Symptoms include flashes of light or blind spots and difficulty focusing. This stage normally lasts around 15 minutes to an hour.
- 3. Headache stage.** This is usually a pulsating or throbbing pain on one side of the head. There is often nausea or vomiting, extreme sensitivity to bright light and sounds, and a strong desire to lie down in a darkened room. This stage lasts for four to 72 hours.
- 4. Resolution stage.** Most attacks gradually fade away. Some people find the headache stops suddenly after they've been sick. Sleep often relieves the symptoms.
- 5. 'Postdromal' or recovery phase.** There may be a stage of exhaustion and weakness afterwards.



This article comes to you from CS Healthcare, the specialist provider of health insurance for civil servants. Telephone 0800 917 4325. www.cshealthcare.co.uk

This article is intended as general advice only. If you or a family member have any medical concerns contact your GP or medic.

VITAL NUMBERS

THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE READY TO HELP YOU

RN Benevolent Trust: Grants, advice and income supplements for veterans. Call 0239 2690112 or email rnbtd@rnbtd.org.uk.

RN Association: Comradeship for all serving and ex-Service members of the RN, RM, QARNNS, WRNS, Reserves, RFA and RNXS. royal-naval-association.co.uk

Royal Marines Benevolent Fund: Relieves hardship among serving and former Marines and dependents. royalmarines.charities@charity.vfree.com or call 02392 547201.

ABF The Soldiers Charity: Support to soldiers and veterans. www.soldierscharity.org or call 0845 241 4820.

RAF Benevolent Fund: Help for RAF personnel past and present. rafbf.org or call 0800 1692942.

The Charity for Civil Servants: Helps anyone who has worked for the Civil Service and their dependents. Advice about support and financial help. csbf.org.uk or call 0800 056 2424.

Army Welfare Service: HQ AWS has relocated to Upavon. Confidential support for soldiers and families. army.mod.uk/welfare-support/family/default.aspx or call (UK) 01980 615975.

RAF Association (RAFA): Comradeship and care for current and former RAF members. rafa.org.uk/welfare.asp.

HIVE: Tri-Service information covering issues like education and health. 167 offices. hive.mod.uk.

Royal British Legion: Charity providing financial, social and emotional support to vets and serving, and dependents. www.britishlegion.org.uk or call 08457 725 725.

SSAFA Forces Help: Supports serving personnel, veterans and the families of both. Practical and financial assistance and emotional support. ssafa.org.uk or call 0845 1300 975.

Harassment, bullying or discrimination: JSP 763, The MOD Harassment Complaints Procedures, is a guide for Services and civilians. Contact the Defence Business Services on 0800 345 7772 (+441225 829572 from overseas) or em: PeopleServices@pppa.mod.uk.

Matters of conscience and whistleblowing under the Public Interest Disclosure Act. Call 0800 3457772. Select option four.

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency: Pay, pensions and personnel support for the Services and veterans, including the JPA system, and Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre: 0800 0853600; 0800 1692277 or veterans-uk.info

MOD Occupational Welfare Service: Confidential advice on work and personal issues. Call 0800 345 7047

Service Complaints Commissioner: To make a complaint or seek advice, email: contact@oscc.gsi.gov.uk

Naval Personal & Family Service and Royal Marines Welfare: NPFS & RMW have three main offices in the UK, where the serving person's next of kin resides determines which office to contact.

■ Eastern area office - HMS Nelson - Tel: 023 92 722 712 - after hours 023 92 726 159.

■ Western area office - HMS Drake - Tel: 01752 555 041 - after hours 01752 555 220.

■ Northern area office - Helensburgh - Tel: 01436 672 798 - after hours 01436 674 321 (Ext 4005)

RM Welfare - 01752 836 395 (via duty officer, guardroom RM Stonehouse).

The Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS): Charity providing welfare support from frontline to recovery for wounded, sick and injured serving personnel and their families when they are in hospital, rehabilitation or recovery centres. www.dmws.org.uk or call 01264 774000

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